

Washington, DC – Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) helped the House pass by a 266-160 margin the Fiscal Year 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The bill included a \$300,000 project sponsored by the Congressman to support Cheyney University's Aquaculture Research and Education Center, which supports the growth of commercial aquaculture in Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic Region through its research, education, and extension projects. It now awaits Senate approval and the President's signature.

In addition, this legislation allocates necessary resources for economic development in rural areas as well as programs that help families most affected by the struggling economy to afford nutritious meals.

"Passage of this important bill and support for the Cheyney Aquaculture Center will help develop and support new economic avenues for our region—helping to attract and retain young people in Pennsylvania," said Congressman Sestak. "At Cheyney I have worked hard to facilitate collaborative projects between the university and community and business leaders. I particularly applaud the work of President Howard-Vital and her administration to improve the school's financial management and strategic planning so that the school will be qualified for increased support from the state of Pennsylvania, benefactors and alumni. As the oldest Historically Black University in the country, Cheyney University is a treasured resource."

In all, the bill provides \$123.8 billion—3 percent more than Fiscal Year 2009 funding (14 percent more if emergency stimulus funds are not taken into account) and funds the Department of Agriculture; the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC); and the Farm Credit Administration. Approximately 80 percent of the resources are assigned to mandatory spending programs, which include food stamps – for which there has been a sharp increase in demand due to rising unemployment and falling household income; school lunch and other child nutrition programs, which receive 12 percent more than the current funding level; the Women, Infants, and Children program, which receives ten percent more than the current funding level; the Food & Drug Administration, which receives 14 percent more than the current level; rural development programs, which receive four percent more than the current level; and Agriculture Department conservation programs, which receive one percent more than the current level.

"We must ensure that during these difficult economic times we offer the necessary support for Americans most affected and for programs that must thrive in our economic recovery, which

certainly include agricultural initiatives,” said Congressman Sestak. “To meet these objectives, this bill increases funding for both nutritional assistance as well as infrastructure in rural areas, while significantly cutting spending where it is not necessary.”

More specifically, the bill includes the following provisions:

Details of 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH

Food and Drug Administration: \$2.995 billion, the same as the President’s request and \$373 million over 2009, to help FDA improve the safety of domestic and imported food and medical products.

Food Safety and Inspection Service: \$1.018 billion, the same as the President’s request and \$47 million over 2009, for inspection of meat, poultry and egg products, helping to ensure the safety of these products.

HELPING THOSE HIT HARDEST BY THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Nutrition for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): \$7.541 billion, \$236 million below the President’s request and \$681 million above 2009, to provide proper nutrition to mothers and their children. The bill provides funding to help up to an additional 700,000 women, infants, and children, bringing WIC participation to over ten million people.

It also sets aside \$125 million for the upcoming WIC reauthorization, including a number of program improvements such as: increasing fruit and vegetable vouchers, supporting management information systems, implementing the electronic benefit transfer system, and expanding breast feeding peer counseling program.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program: \$180 million, \$17 million over the President’s request and \$19.6 million over 2009, to provide nutritious food to over a half million low-income women, infants, children, and elderly citizens struggling with rising food costs. In order to ensure that more families receive the support they need during this period of economic stress, the bill also provides funding to expand this critical assistance in 32 current states and in 6 new states with USDA-approved feeding plans. These new states are: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Delaware, Utah, New Jersey, Georgia.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): \$61.352 billion, the same as the President’s request and \$7.383 billion over 2009. Funding is included for an initiative to increase elderly participation. It has been estimated that only 30 percent of eligible seniors participate in SNAP.

International Food Aid (P.L. 480 Title II and McGovern-Dole): \$1.69 billion, as requested and \$464 million above 2009, for the P.L. 480 Title II Grants Program to meet emergency and

nonemergency humanitarian food needs in countries stricken with natural disasters and political strife. And \$199.5 million for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, the same as requested and \$99.5 million above 2009, to support education, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children.

REINVESTING IN RURAL AMERICA

Rural Development: \$2.825 billion, \$191 million below the President's request and \$92 million above 2009, for USDA programs important to rural communities including rural housing, water projects, community facilities and economic development efforts. These programs not only sustain our rural communities, but also create new opportunities for growth and development in the nation's small town economies. The bill builds on the strong base provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and makes substantial investments in rural communities. The bill provides funding for programs that help house families (\$8.7 billion), invest in rural businesses (\$1.2 billion), and support new community facility infrastructure (\$542 million for community facilities, and \$9.3 billion for the rural utilities programs).

Animal and Plant Health: \$886 million, \$8.6 million above the President's request and \$4.3 million above 2009, to fund programs that protect American agriculture against animal and plant diseases.

Agricultural Research: \$1.19 billion, \$37 million above the President's request and \$3 million above 2009, for the Agricultural Research Service and \$1.253 billion, \$87 million above the President's request and \$31 million above 2009, for the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (formerly called CSREES) for important agricultural research.

Farm Service Agency: \$67.3 million, as requested, to fully fund the 2010 costs to continue modernizing the Farm Service Agency's information technology networks and databases in order to provide more effective and secure service for the agency's customers.

CONSERVATION

Conservation Programs: \$980.3 million, \$72.9 million above the President's request and \$11.9 million above 2009, for the Natural Resources Conservation Service to improve service in the field, deliver conservation to protect the environment, and upgrade aging dams at risk of catastrophic failure. The bill restores cuts to valuable conservation programs, including the Resource Conservation and Development Program and the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program. Importantly, the bill rejects \$267 million in cuts to priority farm bill conservation programs, including the Wetlands Reserve Program, Farmland Protection Program, and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program.

OVERSIGHT AND ENFORCEMENT

Commodity Futures Trading Commission: \$160.6 million, as requested, and \$14.6 million above 2009, to enhance oversight of the commodity futures markets. The increased resources will provide for additional staff and improved technology to better secure the markets from improper

speculation.

Livestock Competition: \$23.7 million, as requested and \$1.3 million above 2009, to assure fair competition and trade practices, safeguard farmers and ranchers, and to protect consumers and members of the livestock, meat, and poultry industries from unfair, deceptive, discriminatory and monopolistic practices. These funds provide staff to strengthen enforcement, investigative and compliance activities.

SIGNIFICANT CUTS

National Animal Identification: provides no funding for the National Animal Identification System. After receiving \$142 million in funding since fiscal year 2004, the Department has yet to put into operation an effective system that would provide needed animal health and livestock market benefits. USDA is currently conducting a public listening tour around the country for several months to hear from stakeholders. Until USDA finishes these sessions and provides details as to how it will implement an effective ID system, continued investments into the current system are unwarranted.

OTHER IMPORTANT POLICY ITEMS

Imported Poultry Products from China: Prohibits USDA from moving forward with a rule to allow potentially unsafe poultry products from China into the U.S.

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL): Fully funds the costs to continue overseeing country of origin labeling for fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and other products.

Inspection Pilot Program: Prohibits FSIS from implementing a pilot program to inspect certain facilities using a risk-based model until FSIS implements changes recommended by the USDA Inspector General.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including as Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.